

FY2015 Year End Report – Project ID 177

Hawaii Fisheries Extension Program

The Hawaii Fisheries Extension Program (HFEP) was created in 2005 with the objective of reducing fishing impacts to coral reef resources by addressing the longstanding communication difficulties that exist between coral reef stakeholders.

Extension Services:

The HFEP provided extension services to three primary coral reef stakeholder groups throughout FY15.

Resource Managers - The HFEP served as a resource for nearshore coral reef-related fishing, research, and management activities. The HFEP reviewed multiple grant proposals (MET, CRCP, SK) providing perspectives on fishing related activities. It also served on multiple working groups, and worked with PIFSC to review and inform multiple projects such as those that assesses shoreline fishing pressure, conducted economic valuations of fisheries, and evaluated protected species interactions. The HFEP also co-hosted monthly fishery talk story sessions with the Chairperson of the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Scientists/Academia - The HFEP assisted scientists by reviewing fishery survey designs, informing research techniques, and connected them to fishers who could assist with their data collection. Specific examples included assisting University of Hawaii and Hawaii Pacific University masters students network with the fishing community and recruit participation for multiple coral reef fishery related projects. These projects included Spawning Seasons (a project examining spawning patterns of reef fish throughout the State), tagging projects (projects that track life history information as well as encourage catch and release), and an assessment of the impacts of introduced fish, and multiple reef fish genetic and life history studies.

Fishers - In order for the HFEP to be an effective extension service provider, it has to have a consistent and trusted presence in the fishing community. In FY15, this was accomplished by maintaining an unofficial extension Facebook site, assisting, emceeing, or chairing fishing tournaments, and by attending fishing clubs meetings and events to hear concerns and provide information to the public. Specific examples include attending, hosting informational tables, or providing outreach at 28 fishing club meetings, 9 fishing tournaments, and 2 major fishing expos.

Education and Outreach:

In addition to providing extension services, the HFEP also conducted education and outreach activities to promote sustainable fishing ideas, discuss fisheries management, and expose youth to conservation efforts. In FY2015, the HFEP gave talks and presentations to specific audiences at over 20 schools, events, and organizations. The content of the talks covered a variety of topics including invasive species, reducing land-based sources of pollution, ethical fishing, watershed protection, fisheries extension, and fisheries management. The audience also varied greatly and included students as young as pre-kindergarten to college resource management courses, hospitals, fishing camps, and an international conservation conference. Additionally,

the HFEP partnered with other NOAA line offices and State partners to host booths and activities at 6 large outreach events servicing the general public.

The HFEP also developed activities and curriculum, built games and teaching tools, and designed graphics for fisheries education. Examples include developing curriculum for a fisheries management talk at the NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Camp, building an electronic habitat matching activity for outreach at malls, and developing a play with the Hawaii Theater for Youth to addressing conservation, freshwater, and the nearshore waters.

Activities in CRCP Priority Areas:

The HFEP worked with partners in the two CRCP priority areas to assist with the development of outreach materials and to conduct outreach with communities.

West Maui - In West Maui the HFEP is developed a Fish Measurement Guide specific to the new Maui rules. The program also worked with the Spawning Seasons project to encourage fisher participation and provide guidance on the West Hawaii Moon Calendar which displays reef fish spawning seasons for that area and recommends “pono” or responsible fishing practices.

West Hawaii – In West Hawaii, the HFEP was invited to attend the Kiholo community Lawaia (fishing) camp to network with local residents and discuss community-based fisheries management. In collaboration with the Nature Conservancy and Kiholo community, the HFEP also assisted with the organization of a gathering of spearfishermen from throughout the State who were interested in spearing introduced fish (Roi) to help provide samples for multiple studies and fish down an area to help determine the effects of removing roi from a reef.

Scientists and Fishermen Exchange

Scientists and Fishermen Exchange or “SAFE” meetings bring together coral reef stakeholders from throughout the State to discuss topics and issues of mutual interest. Many of these stakeholders would not otherwise be meeting with each other if it were not for this effort. In FY2015, the participants of the SAFE meetings selected recreational fishing licenses for the topic of a meeting. While this may seem to be an insignificant decision, it reflects the positive effects of years of interaction and trust building. Hawaii is the only State that does not have any form of a recreational license, registry, or permitting system and the topic is extremely controversial and complicated. The SAFE meeting included guests speakers from the State of Hawaii to talk about historical efforts to implement a license as well as a guests from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to discuss Federal funding associated with fishery license projects.

The SAFE meeting was implemented successfully without any member conflicts and opened the door for future discussion. Although the participants had very different opinions on fisheries management, the selection of this topic was a good indication that relationships and comfort level has improved within group and while they did not agree on everything that was covered, there was good participation and discussion.

For copies of images from HFEP events or questions related to this report, please contact Matt Ramsey at matthew.ramsey@noaa.gov or (808)725-5089.